STC during 1992-93 and 1993-94 are as follows :—

Year	Weighted average landed cost	Weighted average sale price
	Rs. PMT.	Rs. PMT.
1992-93 . . .	13,336	14,198
1993-94 . . .	13,241	15,389
1993-94 . . .	13,205	13,978*

*For standard newsprint imported from Russia.

Import by Soyabean Processing Industry

1768. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Soyabean processing industry has recently urged Government for a onetime import of one and a half million tonnes bean (Seed) for actual seed users only at zero duty rate ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the prices of Soyabean in the international market had recently fallen due to bumper Soyabean crop in the U. S. A. ; and

(c) if so, what action Government had taken/propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There has been a slight fall in the prices of Soyabean (around 10%) during the first week of December, 1994 compared to the prices of the corresponding period of the last year. The fall in prices could mainly be attributed to the sharp fall in prices of Soyabean from US $ 225 per metric tonne in December, 1993 to US $ 187 per metric tonne at present.

(c) Under the current Export-Import Policy, the import of Soyabean Seed is canalised through the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd. and Hindustan Vegetable Oils Corporation Ltd., Presently, there is no proposal under consideration to decanalise the import of Soyabean Seeds.

Duty Exemption Entitlement Scheme

1769. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that several industrial importers are taking advantage of "Duty Exemption Entitlement Scheme";

(b) whether it is also a fact that these importers are importing raw material worth crores of rupees and exporting in lacs ;

(c) whether Government are aware that largely the bross, electronic components chemicals and high tension plastic importers are involved in such activities ;

(d) the number of defaulters so far apprehended and the punishment/fine imposed on them ; and

(e) whether Government propose to blacklist such importers and if not, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) All eligible exporters, including those in the brass, electronic components, chemicals and plastic sectors can use the Duty Exemption Scheme subject to fulfillment of the provisions and conditions laid down in Export-Import Policy and Hand Book of Procedures 1992-97. All exports through Value Duty Exemption Scheme are with requisite value addition. Hence value of exports are always more than the value of imports.

(d) and (e) Investigations so far have not revealed large scale misuse of the value based advance licensing scheme. Action against suspected defaulters is taken under the provisions of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992. This Act does not have a provision for blacklisting of importers. The details of action taken against the defaulting firms during the past 3 years are as fllows :

	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Number of firms on which fiscal penalty imposed . .	281	188	58
Number of firms debarred	304	132	47
Number of firms placed under abeyance . . .	67	88	2
Number of liucences cancelled	4	21	2

Boosting Exports of STC

1770. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation has contemplated any serious efforts during the past few months to give priority to exports with tie-ups on the production front ;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the performance of STC has been continuously declining; and

(d) if so, the concrete steps Government propose to take to boost export performance of STC?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. STC is making vigorous efforts to increase its non-canalised exports by way of enrolling a number of associates to ensure supply sources. With a view to further strengthening the captive supply base, it plans to enter into tie-ups for export production in identified areas.

(c) and (d) Total turnover of STC during 1993-94 of Rs. 1117 crores registered a growth of 10% over its performance at the level of Rs. 1013 crores during 1992-93. Export turnover of Rs. 798 crores of STC during 1993-94 was higher by 45% as compared to its export turnover of Rs. 551 crores in 1992-93. Similarly, non-canalised import turnover also rose by 74% from the level of Rs. 39 crores in 1992-93 to Rs. 68 crores during 1993-94.

Expert Committee by Tobacco Board and Health Ministry

1771. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tobacco Board has made any contact with the Health Ministry to jointly appoint an Expert Committee as resolved by the Tobacco Board; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Health Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The resolution of the Tobacco Board is available with the Ministry of Health. That Ministry has been requested to take appropriate action in this regard.

Role of Statutory Bodies under Ministry of Commerce

1772. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the role of statutory bodies like Spices Board and Tobacco Board under the Ministry of Commerce;

(b) whether Government have downgraded the importance of such statutory bodies; and

(c) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Spices Board was formed for the development and export of Spices and regulation of cardamom industry including cultivation of cardamom and matters connected therewith.

The Tobacco Board basides aiming to promote the development of tobacco industry performs functions such as regulation of production, curing and marketing of virginia tobacco, ensuring fair price to Virginia growers, promoting exports and sponsoring as well as coordinating, research activities for promotion of tobacco industry.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Utilisation of Tobacco Board in Improving Tobacco Economy

1773. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have been taken to utilise the Tobacco Board in improving the tobacco economy;

(b) whether Commerce Ministry gives adequate weightage to recommendations and resolutions of the Tobacco Board; and

(c) what are the guidelines with regard to implementing the suggestions and recommendations of Tobacco Board by Commerce Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) The Tobacco Board is charged with the responsibility of promoting the tobacco industry and of regulating production and marketing of virginia tobacco to achieve the larger objective of ensuring remunerative returns to the tobacco growers. It strives to improve the quality of virginia tobacco in India and to promote exports of all varieties of tobacco and tobacco products.

(b) and (c) Recommendations of the Tobacco Board are given due consideration before any decisions in respect of this sector are taken.

Reconstitution of Tobacco Board

1774. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tobacco Board is to be re-constituted in the near future;

(b) when the tenure of the present board is likely to end;

(c) whether Government will nominate representatives of tobacco growers from